

# Bible Studies

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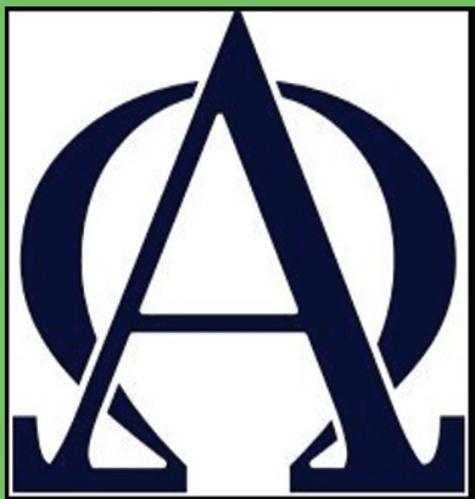
## Revelation – Victory Book Chapters 12–22

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Revelation 22:13

## A TRIAD OF DEVILRY

Could we imagine a more frightening physical appearance of a figure than that described by John in our study chapter, of the beast who emerges from the sea? Perhaps more fearful than any bodily feature is the fact there are names of blasphemy inscribed on the seven heads of the creature, so deeply offensive to God and heavenly dwellers (Rev. 13:6). There is nothing and no one comparable to this living specimen of ferocity and malevolence, insomuch that people of the world view him as invincible. He has delegated authority from an even greater being, his superior, the great dragon, whose control over this material world is considerable, being the prince of the power of the air and the god of this age of civilization (John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4). The driving force of his far-ranging influence and powerful personality will brook no rival, and the pathological fear he instils in every living person will not be resisted.

Another human form now comes boldly on to the world stage, less terrifying in looks than his predecessor, but this time arising from the ground.

Possessing an equally impressive 'presence' and prestige as that of the

Beast, his dominant persona successfully manages to get people of this world, with the exception of those whose names have been written in the Lamb's book of life, to worship the Beast and then by producing amazing feats of deception causes earth-dwellers to erect an image in his honour, and moreover make that image come alive! There seems to be no end to the mystery of lawlessness and iniquity that will befall this world during the three and a half years of great tribulation.

Thankfully, all believers in the Lord Jesus in this the day of grace, will be spared such awful times, by God's own Son, our glorious Saviour, coming to the air beforehand for His loved and His own, and thereby delivering them from the wrath of that future period as well as that eternally (1 Thes. 1:10). How much we need to pray ahead for those who will be living on this earth after the Rapture, for what they will have to go through in those excruciating times (Mat. 24:13-14, 21). There might even be those who are descendants of present-day believers' families, or further down the generations, who will be there. We can only leave these matters with the Lord who understands our deepest yearnings.

*R.B.F.*

## *From Study Groups . . .*

### THE DRAGON, TWO BEASTS, AND THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST (REVELATION 13)

**From Aberdeen:** 'The beast is first of all a system of Gentile government, and this government is set forth as a beast with seven heads and ten horns.' Here we have Revelation 13:1 presented mainly as a *system* of government as explained in John Miller's *Notes on Revelation*. Perhaps in verse two the beast described with leopard, bear and lion characteristics brings us a combined picture of both the *system* and the *man*. From verse three onwards we are mainly presented with the Beast who is the man. From this understanding it would follow that the man, the Beast (who is the Antichrist) is the one who gets the death-wound, and this very strange event will add to the amazement of the whole world concerning the power and ability of this future political figure. On the other hand, we are not told how long a time-interval there is between the death-wound and when it is healed. Is it possible that both the *system* and the *man* are recipients of a death-wound which is healed? Otherwise, how should we interpret 'one of his heads as if it had been slain' in verse three, which evidently refers to one of the 'seven heads' of the Beast presented in verse one? [Comment 1].

The detailed outline which is presented by the apostle John makes abundantly clear that this future leader will arise and will control the levers of political power, such that his authority will encompass 'every tribe and people and tongue and nation' (Rev. 13:7 NASB). It is remarkable that this Beast shall have the dragon's authority and shall be permitted to continue in power for forty-two months. Nevertheless, all authority ultimately lies within God's authority and these events will be swiftly brought to their conclusion when the day arrives that is foretold concerning God's appointment: "But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain" (Ps. 2:6). *James Johnson*

**From Buckhaven:** Like a marred pottery vessel (Jer.18:1), Israel was marred by disobedience. In grace, God did not cast them aside forever but purposed to bring forth a nation worthy of His name (Ezek. 34:11-24; 37:1-14; Zech. 6:12-13). Before that, Israel must pass through the fire of affliction. Their rejected Messiah said: 'if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive' (John 5:43 RV).

Daniel 7:8 is the first prophecy about the man who is the Antichrist. He is called 'the prince that shall come'; 'the one who makes desolate'; and 'the lawless one, the son of perdition' (Dan. 9:26-27; 2 Thes. 2:3,8) [Comment 2].

In symbol, Daniel also saw a ten-nation European empire: 'the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken' (Dan. 2:42). Again: 'a fourth beast ... and it had ten horns ... among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up ... in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things' (7:7-8). The 'little horn' is the Beast of Revelation 13:1. He emerges out of 'the sea' of nations that surround the Mediterranean, as the dominant leader of a coalition of ten kings. The 'ten horns and seven heads' (v.1) represent the economic and political system he will lead.

The Antichrist derives his power from the Devil, to whom (alone) for a time, have been granted the kingdoms of the world (Luke 4:5-8; Rev. 12:3). He will hate God and dominate the world's economy by way of his mark and number, 666 (Rev. 13: 17-18). Those who take the mark on forehead or hand and worship the Beast or his image, will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:4,15). This man will dominate the world for three and a half years/42 months (Rev. 13:5). God is sovereign and only allows men to do what He permits, working out His purposes in spite of their opposition.

The second 'two-horned' beast (v.11) also derives his power from the dragon. This is the false prophet of Revelation 16:13 and 19:20. He will raise up an image of the Beast in the temple and cause people to worship him, a blatant act of blasphemy against God. Those who refuse to take the mark and worship him will suffer relentless persecution. Many will be martyred.

Verse 14 says the first Beast had 'the stroke of the sword, and lived'. He receives a 'death wound' (Rev. 13:3,12,14; 17:8). The same word (*thanatos*) is used to describe the death of the Lamb of God (Heb. 5:7; 9:15). The Beast goes down to the abyss and is resurrected (Rev. 17:8). The power of the evil one, bringing a mortal man back from death, is a great mystery [Comment 3]. This will cause wonder (13:3), and lead folk to worship the Beast and the dragon (Satan). The Antichrist will blaspheme the name of God and His tabernacle (Rev. 13:5-6).

At the height of his power, in open rebellion against the Lord, the last Gentile king with the confederated nations, makes war with the saints (v.7) for 42 months. 'It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it' (Jer. 30:7).

*Martin Notman*

**From Cromer:** The Beast (the Antichrist) will appear on the world stage after the Church the Body of Christ has been taken to be with the Lord. He will rule the world politically and be given authority over every tribe, people, tongue and nation (13:7). He has an accomplice, another beast (the false prophet) who endeavours to make earth's inhabitants accept a mark on their right hand or

forehead. Without this mark they cannot buy or sell. Those who accept the mark are eternally lost (14:9-11).

The second beast deceives the inhabitants of earth and sets up an image of the Beast which has the power to speak. Everyone is made to worship the image. If they refuse, they are killed (13:14-15). So by these controls, the Beast and the false prophet, dominate the inhabitants of earth [cp. Comment 2, para. 2].

*Satan's authority and the authority of God* Satan is referred to as the prince of this world (John 14:30) and the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4). It is evident therefore that Satan has some limited authority on earth. During the temptations of Christ in the wilderness, Satan showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and said, 'I will give you all their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want' (Luke 4:6 NIV). Some would suggest from this that it really was in Satan's power to give an antichrist dominion. But according to Scripture this cannot be true. Satan himself is subject to the permissive will of God and is given power, only so that God's purposes can be realised. Satan was allowed to test Job but was not permitted to take Job's life (Job 2:6).

Scripture says there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God (Rom.13:1) [Comment 4].

*John Parker*

**From Greenock:** To His disciples' question, 'What shall be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?' (Mat. 24:3 NKJV), Jesus answered, 'Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only' (v.36). Believers are in a similar position to that of our Lord and Saviour. We know that He is coming to claim His bride, but we don't know when [Comment 5].

The Rapture could happen at any time; the Tribulation will follow soon after. We may now be living in the time leading up to the tribulation, and the Covid-19 pandemic could be a presage of the pestilences to come. There are famines and earthquakes happening now which are harbingers of those that will occur in the tribulation; the godless policies of governments are portents of the absolute evil that will be commonplace in that time.

Many people will have no difficulty in queuing up to receive the mark of the beast. Their identities as real people are being considered to be of secondary importance. They all have names, but to bureaucratic governments they are better known by their personal identification numbers—date of birth, social security numbers, passport numbers, telephone numbers, etc. There are eyes in the sky, cameras in streets and in shops, etc., recording each individual's every movement.

The Tribulation temple could be built soon after the Rapture. All the component parts of the temple are believed to have already been built, ready to

be assembled. Priests and Levites are being trained in the slaughter and the sacrifice of kosher animals. The implements for sacrifice have been made. Pure red heifers have been bred. The fact that these things are already in place indicate that the world is fast approaching the lead-up to the tribulation. If these things appear to be near at hand then the coming of the Lord Jesus at the rapture is nearer still.

May we expectantly wait in great anticipation the coming of our great God and Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, because that glorious event could happen at any time.

*John Peddie*

**From Halifax:** *Two beasts* To us the seashore may be a place of beauty, discovery, and restful holiday; yet the phrase ‘upon the sand’ carries the idea of an innumerable multitude, as in its grains (cp. Rev. 20:8). On the other hand, we do recognize the dangers of the sea, from where John observes a wild beast ‘coming up’ (13:1b RV), upon whose heads were ‘names of blasphemy’. Here we understand the sea to speak of the ‘abyss’, as seen in Revelation 11:7 [Comment 6]. The first beast is described as being ‘like unto a leopard’ (13:2), or as Tyndale translates, ‘like a cat of the mountain’ (*New Testament*). This panther (Gk. *pardalis*, Jas. Strong), like a seven-headed beast, is envisioned as having the feet of a ‘bear’ and a mouth of a ‘lion’—symbolic of fierceness—to whom was given power and great authority from the dragon. He shall be worshipped by all, that is to say: ‘every one whose name hath not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world’ (v.8). Immediately upon this the Lamb Himself (possibly) exhorts with words of monition: ‘If any man hath an ear, let him hear’ (v.9).

The imitative role assumed by the second beast, in respect to the true Lamb, is indicated by its two lamb-like horns (v.11, cp. Mat. 7:15); but he speaks as a dragon—he is haughty, and conceited, his utterance has an arrogant tone. Having come up from the earth, this wonder-working deceiver commands men to make an ‘image’ (Gk. *eikon*) of the first Beast and, by power granted to him, he gave that image breath. All would be caused to worship this one, their demanded homage requiring a mark being made on their forehead or right hand; the ‘number of the beast’ (Rev. 13:18).

*Robert J. Butler*

**From Mount Forest:** The ‘saints’ of the last sentence of Revelation 13:10 (and 14:12; 17:6) may primarily be the same as mentioned in verse 7, i.e., those who are faithful unto death during the Great Tribulation (cp. Rev. 12:11,17). These may, after the Rapture, have read and applied to themselves, not only Revelation 13:9 but also 2:7,10,25 and especially 3:10f. (and perhaps generally references to ‘overcomer’ mentioned in the letters).

These saints do have their names written in the Lamb's book of life. When exactly that writing of their names is done is unclear from the text, and while RV/AV see the phrase as meaning the Lamb is slain 'from the foundation of the world' several versions (e.g., ESV, NASB, RVM) instead relate those words to the timing of the writing of the names. The parallel reference in Revelation 17:8 supports the ESV rendering here while 13:8 actually is describing those whose names were not written (the Greek perfect tense may imply they never were, just as Luke 10:20 implies that the names of others enduringly have been). 'From the foundation' seem to be words that emphasize complete divine foreknowledge of events that by sovereign election would certainly occur at specific times, or logically in the case of others, foreknown never to occur (see also 1 Pet. 1:19-20; Heb. 9:26 and Eph. 1:4) [Comment 7].

Election to salvation is by predetermined sovereign will, though subsequently it will be found that God mercifully calls to each individual soul to make their own decision in response to the gospel He proclaims (Rom. 9:11,14-24). But if the names of certain souls were never written in the book of life, how could they be erased from it? And if names can be erased, how does that square with eternal salvation? So, must we deduce there are three classes: those never written (e.g., Rom. 9:22; Rev. 13:8; 17:8); those forever written (e.g., Luke 10:20; John 10:28; 1 John 5:13); those written but open to being erased in the outworking of divine justice (e.g., Rev. 3:5—cp. Ex. 32:33; Ps. 69:28). Because of difficulty aligning the latter with eternal salvation, some think Revelation 3:5 (and 2:11) can only be a comforting reassurance for all saints, not a special reward for a limited number of those who overcome. The logical deduction that erasing can occur may have to be subsumed within a higher divine imperative [Comment 8].

Those saints in Revelation 13 could have read 3:11 and believed in an eternal gospel (Rev. 14:6-7; Mat. 24:14) that always proclaims Christ's coming as good news (Gk. *euaggelion*) and not subject to repentance of those in 13:8 [Comment 9]. In that future day He will not be coming to Calvary to die again for sinners, nor coming to the air to rapture believers, but to the Mount of Olives for those who have endured to see Him vindicate them as ruler and judge, and set up an earthly kingdom. It seems, therefore, that what people are to hear from 13:10 is that captivity or death may be inevitable, and must be faithfully accepted; but He is coming!

*Geoff Hydon*

**From Ravulapalem:** *The scope of the dragon's authority* The dragon gave its power and its throne and great authority to the Beast (13:2). Moreover, why should Satan not give the wild beast its great authority? Satan is described as 'an angel of light', a master of deception who exercises powerful influence in the world of religion and philosophy (2 Cor. 11:3,14-15; Eph. 6:11-18). While Jesus

was here on earth Satan claimed to have authority over all kingdoms of the earth. Jesus did not dispute this: in fact, He himself referred to Satan as the ruler of the world and refused to participate in the politics of that day [Comment 10]. John later wrote of true Christians, 'We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one' (1 John 5:19 ESV).

The first wild beast comes out of the sea, which is a fitting symbol of the turbulent masses from which human government springs (see Is. 17:12-13). The Beast is Satan's political [and commercial and religious—*M.A.*] creation among the masses of mankind. Authority to act for 42 months was given to it to war with the saints. The 42 months appear to be the same as the three and half years during which the holy ones are harassed by one of the beasts in Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 7:23-25). It is the divine limit set for the bestial kingdom.

Another wild beast, ascending out of the earth, begins speaking as a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first Beast in its sight (Rev. 13:12). As it is coming out of the earth it comes out of Satan's already established earthly system of things. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven (cp. Mat. 7:21-23).

*The authority of God* The Lord Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 28:18 that all authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth. We say, to God be the dominion and power forever (Jude v.25). *S.J.M. Edward*

**From Surulere:** *The dragon's authority* The dragon, the Devil, has always been obsessed with a pursuit of authority. In the misty events, to human comprehension, before the creation of man, he laid claim to the supreme of all positions: the throne of the Almighty God: 'How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High"' (Is. 14:12-14 NKJV).

Scripture is clear that all power and authority belong to God and His Son, the Lord Jesus: 'God has spoken once, twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God' (Ps. 62:11) and, 'Jesus came and spoke to them saying: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"' (Mat. 28:18). Yet there exists some residue of authority reserved for the Devil solely in the forbearance of God. The Lord Jesus hinted at it thus: 'I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me' (John 14:30). The apostle Paul wrote of 'the prince of the power of the air' (Eph. 2:2) and of the hierarchy of satanic rule: 'for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against

spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places' (Eph. 6:12-13). The apostle John spoke also: 'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one' (John 5:19).

And so the dragon exercising authority, either out of the forbearance of Almighty God, or usurped by him as a thief and robber (John 10:10), will bestow this tainted authority on his evil minions, the Beast the system, the Antichrist and the false prophet. The Devil's passion for parodying the sublime eternal unity of the Trinity will reach its climax at this time: 'The dragon gave him his power, his throne and great authority ... So they worshipped the dragon who gave authority to the Beast; and they worshipped the Beast' (Rev. 13:2-4).

The Beast the Antichrist, and the beast the false prophet, both exercise the perfidious authority of the dragon, with the ultimate objective that accursed men and women, whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life will worship the dragon and his other self, the Beast (v.8).

Overarching this seeming beastly and devilish demonstration of unbridled authority, is the sovereign authority of God. The dragon and beasts exercise authority and power only within the divinely prescribed limits and timeframe. It is impossible for this triumvirate of evil to exceed those boundaries: 'And he was given authority to continue for forty-two months' (v.6); 'It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation' (v.7).

The Devil knows, perhaps, but as is often the case, persists in self-delusion, that the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 4:17). In this seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy and more specifically the latter half of the 7 years of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), the events must go as decreed millennia earlier: 'Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate' (Dan. 9:27). 'Then the saints shall be given into his hands for a time and times and half a time' (7:25). *Frederick F. Ntido*

**From Victoria B.C.:** We see in 13:1-3 a kingdom, or empire, appearing in the history of our planet. It seems to have all the attributes of previous world empires, spoken of in Daniel 8, that have come and gone over time. This new kingdom has a leader—the Beast, and he is given power, a seat (throne) and great authority from the dragon, which represents Satan (cp. Luke 4:5-8). Scripture indicates he receives a deadly wound but recovers, and as a result people all over the planet wonder about him or have great admiration for him and worship the dragon who

empowers him. The people feel he is unstoppable, and he speaks great and terrible blasphemies against God and all things in heaven.

On earth he makes war with the saints of that day (v.7) and systematically takes over 'all nations'. Everyone whose name is not in the book of life of the Lamb will worship this beastly individual. Verses 9-10 show that it is going to be a bloody and terrible time for the saints of God. Believers can rest in the fact that the prince of this world is cast out (John 12:32) and eventually all men will proclaim Jesus as sovereign (1 Chr. 16:31).

There is a second beast mentioned who reinforces what the first Beast says and does, and causes the earth and all dwellers therein to worship the first Beast. This second beast has been granted power to bring fire down from heaven and cause an image to the first Beast to be animated and speak. It also orders that all who do not worship this image should be killed. The world economy changes and links having a mark on the forehead or right hand, bearing the Beast's name or the number of his name, to buying day-to-day necessities. From this mark a grievous sore will result (Rev. 16:2). 14:11 further says whoever takes that mark will be tormented forever. God, through John, gives us a clue to his number: it is a man's number—666 [Comment 11].

As we witness the world changing quickly around us this chapter is revealing what is to occur in the near future, and that we as believers in the Lord Jesus must be watchful and patient, giving reason for the hope that lies within us, while we await the coming day when these mortal, corruptible bodies will be changed to be like His glorious body (1 Thes. 4:15-16; 1 Pet. 3:15; 1 Cor. 15:54).

*Rodger Lefevre; Micah Lefevre*

## COMMENTS

**1. (Aberdeen):** It would be purely conjecture to suggest some possible hiatus in a world governmental sense, and especially bearing in mind that it is only one of the seven heads that suffered a fatal blow at some undefined time. *R.B.F.*

Agreeing with R.B.F., nevertheless we could go as far as to suggest the world government's leadership will be seriously affected by one of its rulers being wounded to the point of death. A world power as corrupt and violent as those of lesser extent and might that have gone before it (the lion, bear and leopard of Daniel 7) would be thrown into disarray if rivalry for dominance or succession led to this death or followed it. *M.A.*

**2. (Buckhaven and others):** Interestingly, the three features of this first Beast—leopard, bear and lion-like, are the exact descriptions of the first three of the four beasts in Daniel 7:3-7, representative of earthly powers and their leaders of a past day. Their empires flourished through military conquest but were destined to crash spectacularly. How different from that given by the Ancient of days to one like unto the Son of man, no other than our Lord Jesus, whose dominion is imperishable and His kingdom indestructible (Dan. 7:11-14)! R.B.F.

*'The Beast' expressing two related entities* Buckhaven paper focuses on the Antichrist, and so gives a clear line on his development from the Beast which emerges from the sea in Revelation 13, and as leader of Daniel 7's 10-kingdom confederacy. But, as in some other papers, we need still to account for how the Beast in Rev. 13:1-2 can have seven heads and ten horns. The view set out in Aberdeen paper is the simplest and clearest solution to this, matching the detail in both books. The Beast in Rev. 13 is both a system of world rule and the leader (one of the seven kings) who dominates its ten-fold ruling body, until he is fatally wounded and later is resurrected by satanic power, as permitted by God. In 14:8 and chs. 17-18 the system is depicted as Babylon, a redeveloped form of the kingdom of Daniel's times. M.A.

**3. (Buckhaven):** With due respect to this widely held view, I don't believe the Antichrist actually dies and is raised again from the dead. Only God has power to raise the dead (Luke 12:5)—'to kill and to make alive' (2 Kin. 5:7); it is the Lord Jesus who has 'the keys of death and of Hades' (Rev. 1:18). Men are appointed to die 'once' only—not twice (Heb. 9:27), therefore I think this is a Satanic deception: it only *looks as if* he died and rose again: 'The death and resurrection of the Lord [is] simulated in the bringing of the beast up from the abyss' (G.P. Jr., *B.S.*, 1974, p.32); 'Satan's master lie will be a travesty of the incarnation' (*The Coming Prince*, Sir Robert Anderson, Hodder and Stoughton, 1895, p.208). The coming of 'the lawless one ... is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness' (1 Thes. 2:9-10). Not for nothing is Satan described as 'the devil that deceived them' (Rev. 20:10).

**4. (Cromer):** We wholeheartedly subscribe to the view that any authority and power wielded by Satan or men, is delegated by Almighty God and is limited in scope. I would maintain however, that delegated power and authority confers the freedom to exercise it for good or ill, otherwise individuals cannot be held accountable for their abuses of it. (See Ravulapalem and Surulere papers, and Comment 10.)

5. **(Greenock):** ‘Of that day and that hour’ (Mat. 24:36) follows on from verse 35 and (I would argue), is specifically related to the statement: ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away’ and to the last part of the disciples’ question: ‘the end of the world(‘age’)?’ (Mat. 24:3). The second part of the question (‘what shall be the sign ... of the end of the world?’—*aion*, ‘age’) is answered by the Lord in verse 31: ‘He shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect ...’ It seems to me that this links with 13:40-41: ‘As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world’ (‘age’). The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity ...’

So I believe Mat. 24:36 is often misquoted to wrongly suggest that the Lord does not know the timing of His return, either to the air for His bride, or to earth at the end of the time of Jacob’s trouble. As I read it, the ‘day and hour’ known only to the Father, is the day and hour when the present heaven and earth will pass away. J.J.

This is a better explanation of the puzzle why the Son should not know the day or hour than some suggestions, e.g., that while on earth the Lord lived by faith. He did have divine knowledge that He revealed at times, as of the fall of Satan (Luke 10:18), the detailed history of the woman of Samaria (John 4:17-18), or the time of Peter’s final denial.

We might ask, however, why the Lord would say so little about the end of the earth and the created heaven, and then return to His coming as Son of Man. This is easier to answer: He knew the disciples had enough to digest in these discourses (until his 40 days of teaching after resurrection or the coming of the Spirit to guide them: cp. Luke 24:27 on exposition of the prophets). So He brings them back to the importance of expectancy and readiness, as also in Mark 13:33-37.

The cogency, however, of P.D.’s view below, especially Acts 1:7, needs still to be answered. To me it’s not enough to say that verse is a general truth not specific to the coming of the Lord as Son of Man. M.A.

Difficulties in working out how the three questions raised by the disciples in Matthew 24:3 are specifically answered in the ensuing discourse do not mean that it is necessary to look beyond them to justify the existence of verses 35-36. Perhaps Jesus is not deflecting from dealing with the questions when He emphasises in verse 35 the eternal certainty of His words by pointing out that they will even outlast heaven and earth. That to me is the point of verse 35, and the point is lost if the mere comparable is seen as becoming the central point just one sentence later. That is the bigger issue here. The Son, submissive to (but not inferior to) the Father within the Godhead accepts that times and seasons are set within the Father’s own authority (Acts 1:7). I can fully accept the timing of

heaven and earth's passing away is not the point of Acts 1:7 but do not find easy to take on board the immediate shift of emphasis J.J.'s view requires. *P.D.*

**6. (Halifax):** The 'abyss' of Revelation 11:7 is not the 'sea' of 13:1. It is the cavernous dungeon below earth's surface inhabited by demons under the authority of one of Satan's lieutenants. (See *B.S.* October 2020, p.143, Comment 5). It is also referenced in 17:8.

**7. (Mount Forest):** We have to be careful and clear when considering the divine truths of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. That the former is a prerogative and exercise of the divine will in salvation of souls is indisputable. In I Peter 1:20 the statement about the Lord Jesus being foreknown before the foundation of the world contains the Greek verb *proginosko*, *pro* meaning 'before'; 'in front of'; 'prior to', and *ginosko* 'to know experientially' / 'perceive beforehand'. All that the Lord Jesus was, and ever had been, and always will be, as the eternal Son, and what He would do as Saviour was known, decided, and shared in the eternal counsels of Deity.

'Foreordination', which follows 'foreknew' in Romans 8:29 (RV), having the same meaning as 'predestination' (AV), is the Greek word *proorizō* speaking of being 'predetermined' and signifies the outcome of what the Lord was decreed to do, in the divine mind of the Triune God, before He came to earth, and even before the earth was formed. In all cases of the use of this word a specific purpose is in view, e.g. in Ephesians 1:5 it was for saved sinners to be brought into the family of God by God's grace. In the Romans chapter and verse quoted above, the outcome is that we shall be like Him, bear His image, and ultimately share His glory in bodies incorruptible and immortal (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15:49b, 53; Phil. 3:21). The emphasis then, is not on the objects of predestination, but what they are foreordained to, viz. salvation and glory (Eph. 1:11-12). **In all cases, in Scripture, foreknowledge and foreordination / predestination only occur in the matter of salvation and never damnation** (see also *B.S.* 2010, pp.40-42).

Without dipping the toe for the moment into the Scriptural truth of human responsibility, the danger that we face in the application of what is more often than not, faulty human logic, is being out of sync with God's mind and thoughts—see Isaiah 55:8-9 and Romans 11:33-36.

**8. (Mount Forest):** Believers in the Lord Jesus, being 'chosen' (Eph. 1:4 RV, is the Greek word *eklegomai* – *ek* 'out of', 'from'; and *lego* 'speak understandably'), carries a similar meaning to our word 'elect' (e.g., Tit. 1:1; Gk. *eklektos* selected out). That divine choice took place in eternity, long before the world of humanity was created. Their inscription by name into the book of life may well have taken place in what we may call a different time period, i.e., nearer to or at the birth of

civilization. There is a wide variety of meanings of the preposition 'from' (Gk. *apo*) in Revelation 17:8 as opposed to 'before' (Gk. *pro*) in Ephesians 1:4. Once entered, those names would never be removed. Revelation 3:5 is the Lord's reassurance to His own in the churches mentioned of what they have through divine grace that is worthy of their perseverance of faith. Additionally, we cannot be certain that the books referred to in Exodus 32 and Psalm 69 are the book of life referred to in the New Testament. There could well be a book recording the names of every person born, with a possible meaning in David's imprecatory words of just not being in any way deserving of a place in this world as a result of their utterly despicable actions against the righteous (see also *B.S.* Feb. 2020; Comment 9, para. 3). *R.B.F.*

Of the three verses cited here, 1 Peter 1:19-20 and Ephesians 1:4 support the view that the Lamb was slain (in divine counsel) before the foundation of the world, as well as the elect being written in the book of life of the Lamb. Hebrews 9:26 is using the thought of need for an effective offering quite differently, to deal with a wrong hypothesis, and show that Christ's one offering is effectual forever.

**9. (Mount Forest):** We agree the assurance in 3:5 to the believer who overcomes temptation is addressed to those who had genuinely trusted in Jesus' offering of Himself for their souls' eternal salvation. They were also called and sanctified for service in a church of God. But there is no mere 'just' about the assurance given. To saints in an assembly where most had a name for activity, without spiritual appreciation or life, and were unaware of or uncaring about defilement, the struggle of the few to keep or recover purity and spiritual life would bring doubts that they might be mistaken, or would ever succeed in recovery. To reflect on how they had been redeemed, and that they'd never lose this, would strengthen them to stand firm. Compare the promise to the overcomer(s) in Smyrna (2:11).

This could also hold true for saints of 13:9 in the growing pressure to conform, with covert violence against leaders who uphold true faith, breaking into open persecution. That their names are written in heaven will become very precious while they see many accept the inscription of the Beast.

The idea of an 'eternal salvation' (the paper's para. 3) based on the love of God without need for repentance, is in conflict with the record in Genesis of separated walk with God, and the repentance undoubtedly essential to learning of Him, and demanded by the Law for His holy nation. The Lord's own preaching overtly called for repentance or implied it. Obedience to conscience is also set out in Romans 2, where those who do not know the law of Israel behave worthily of its morality. Those who 'by nature' (2:13 ESV) manage to do this would also 'by nature' recognise wrong and the need to repent of it. *M.A.*

**10. (Ravulapalem):** Undoubtedly, Satan exerts extensive influence in the world (Eph. 2:2 *et al.*) but we could not say he rules the world in the sense of having overall control, as God does (Dan. 4:17, 25, 32; Ps. 66:7), despite the fact that some versions include this word in their translation.

**11. (Victoria):** There have been innumerable speculative explanations for the number 666; one recently carried the suggestion that the Antichrist's Christian name, middle name, and surname would all consist of six letters. *R.B.F.*

# *Feature*

## SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

### History of God's chosen locations where He dwelt up to the time of Solomon's Temple

Initially, the Lord spoke to Moses to pass on to the people of Israel His willingness to acknowledge what they brought to Him, willingly, joyfully, and superabundantly by way of sacrifices and offerings in appreciation of all He had done for them, in whatever place He chose to put His name. There they would be able to meet with Him and be assured of having His blessing upon them. Shortly after this, the Lord communicated to His servant His great desire to have something more permanent, viz. a sanctuary (Heb. *miqdash* 'sacred place') of His own design and configuration, where He would dwell among them. He also called it the tabernacle (Heb. *mishkan* 'a place of residence'). It also had the name of 'the Tent' / 'The Tent of Meeting' and 'the house of the Lord'. Basically, the tabernacle was a physical portable structure symbolically representing God having a place on earth in which to dwell and enjoy fellowship with and among His people. They were required to obey His voice of instruction in the way they should live and keep His covenant with its obligations to adhere to His word. By doing this, Israel would be to Him a very special people, His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex. 19:5-6; 20:24; 23:19; 25:8-9; 33:7-8). All this was followed by descriptions of the various furniture items it would have to contain (Ex. chs. 25 - 28, 30, 36-39).

After the many years of Israel's wilderness wanderings, the tabernacle was set up in Shiloh in the hill country of the land of Canaan, having previously been erected in Gilgal when the nation crossed the Jordan prior to taking possession of the land that God had promised them (Josh. 1:10; 4:1, 19; 18:1; 21:2). When we come to the book of 1 Samuel, we find the Lord's dwelling-place in Shiloh, where the nation's worship and offering of sacrifices were to take place, given the name 'the temple of the LORD'; here Eli, in his late nineties, was priest and Samuel his young attendant (1 Sam. 1:9; 3:3). These institutions, like the Temple, were established for God's glory.

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(To be continued)

### Correction

In January issue, p.17, 'Covers for 2021 magazine', line 3, should read—'For continuity with 2020's study ...' With thanks to watchful readers who alerted us.

*Editors*

He who testifies to these things says,  
"Surely I am coming soon."  
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Revelation 22:20 ESV

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